

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 357

By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to recognize and honor country music legend
Loretta Lynn.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly take great pleasure in recognizing those artists who devote themselves to their craft, thereby enriching the lives of their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, one such individual is Loretta Lynn, an icon of country music whose work has greatly influenced all artists who have come after her; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Lynn was born on April 14, 1932, in Butcher Hollow, near Van Lear, Kentucky; as she sings in her signature song "Coal Miner's Daughter," she grew up in impoverished conditions, living in a mountain cabin with seven brothers and sisters; and

WHEREAS, what her family lacked in financial resources, they made up for with a wealth of love for one another and for music, cultivating a household that brought us not only Loretta Lynn, but also her sister, '70s and '80s country music sensation Crystal Gayle; and

WHEREAS, Loretta Lynn first arrived in Nashville over fifty-five years ago and signed her first recording contract soon thereafter; she became one of the most distinctive performers in country music in the 1960s and 1970s, unafraid to tackle then-taboo subjects through arrestingly honest songs she penned based on her own life experiences; and

WHEREAS, a self-taught guitarist and songwriter, she performed the unglamorous and unappreciated work of a housewife and mother for fifteen years before becoming an entertainer; and

WHEREAS, with the encouragement and assistance of her husband, the late Oliver "Doolittle" Lynn, she recorded her debut single, "I'm a Honky Tonk Girl," which made the charts in the summer of 1960 and brought the couple to Music City; and

WHEREAS, Loretta Lynn began singing regularly on the Grand Ole Opry after her debut on October 15, 1960, and the Wilburn Brothers took her under their wings. Doyle Wilburn gave a tape of Loretta singing one of her songs, "Fool #1," to producer Owen Bradley at Decca Records; soon thereafter, the song became a smash pop hit for Brenda Lee, and Loretta had a recording contract with Decca; and

WHEREAS, like everyone else who knew her, Owen Bradley was impressed with Loretta Lynn's innocence, individualism, infectious wit, independent spirit, humorous candor, refreshing frankness, and immense talent, and he came to regard her as "the female Hank Williams"; and

WHEREAS, Loretta Lynn's Decca chart debut came with 1962's "Success," an aptly named tune and the first of her fifty-one top-ten hits. The release of this single led to an invitation to join the Grand Ole Opry cast later that year, and she also began appearing on the Wilburn Brothers' nationally syndicated television series; and

WHEREAS, in 1967, Ms. Lynn began winning various Female Vocalist of the Year awards, and the industry showered her with songwriting honors, gold records, and other accolades; Loretta Lynn and Conway Twitty also won a long string of Duet of the Year awards between 1971 and 1982; and

WHEREAS, writing from a woman's point of view and acting as the de facto spokesperson for the women of her generation, Loretta Lynn recorded such empowering female statements as "You Want to Give Me a Lift," "I Want to Be Free," "We've Come a Long Way Baby," "Hey Loretta," "Love Is the Foundation," and the hilarious "One's on the Way"; and

WHEREAS, with her instantly recognizable delivery, Loretta Lynn is one of the greatest voices in music history, and through her startlingly original body of work, she expresses a wide range of emotions, from feminine independence and self-respect in "Don't Come Home A-Drinkin'" and "You Ain't Woman Enough," to blue-collar pride in "Coal Miner's Daughter" and "You're Lookin' at Country"; and

WHEREAS, unafraid of controversy and always shooting straight from the hip, Loretta Lynn has written and performed songs about sex, divorce, alcohol, and war; "The Pill," her celebration of sexual liberation, was banned by many radio stations; and

WHEREAS, by the mid-1970s, Loretta Lynn was an undeniable superstar and was regularly featured on the covers of *Newsweek*, *Redbook*, and many other mainstream national publications; and

WHEREAS, she continued to dominate the charts as the 1970s drew to a close, scoring major hits with "Somebody Somewhere," "Out of My Head and Back in My Bed," and "I've Got a Picture of Us on My Mind"; her hits "I Lie" and "Making Love From Memory" carried her into the 1980s; and

WHEREAS, like a phoenix who is reborn from its own ashes, Loretta Lynn is adept at rediscovering her creativity; two years after she was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1983, she was back on the charts with the hit, "Heart Don't Do This to Me"; in 1988, the year she entered the Country Music Hall of Fame, Loretta recorded with k.d. lang, and she earned a gold record in 1994 with *Honky Tonk Angels*, a trio album with Dolly Parton and Tammy Wynette; and

WHEREAS, after her beloved husband's passing in 1996, Loretta Lynn returned to touring and released *Still Country* in 2000; in 2004, she won two Grammy Awards for *Van Lear Rose*, a collaboration with Jack White; and

WHEREAS, Loretta published a second memoir, *Still Woman Enough*, in 2002; her first autobiography, *Coal Miner's Daughter*, had been transformed into an Oscar-winning film biopic starring Sissy Spacek as Loretta and Tommy Lee Jones as "Doo"; and

WHEREAS, one of the most honored musicians of all time, Loretta Lynn has been inducted into more music halls of fame, including the Country Music Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame, than any female recording artist and was the first woman to be named the Country Music Association's Entertainer of the Year in 1972; and

WHEREAS, she received Kennedy Center Honors in 2003 and a Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2013; she has won four Grammy Awards, including a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 2010, and has sold more than forty-five million records worldwide; and

WHEREAS, in March 2016, Loretta Lynn released *Full Circle*, her first new studio album in more than ten years; produced by Patsy Lynn Russell and John Carter Cash and recorded at the Cash Cabin Studio in Hendersonville, *Full Circle* relates Loretta's musical story, from the Appalachian folk songs and gospel music she learned as a child, to new interpretations of her classic hits and country standards, as well as songs newly written for the project; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, PBS premiered a new documentary about Loretta Lynn's remarkable life and career called *American Masters - Loretta Lynn: Still a Mountain Girl*; the film explores her difficult road to stardom, from her Appalachian roots to her struggles in balancing family and her music career during an era when women were beginning to discover their identities apart from their families; and

WHEREAS, for over half a century, Loretta Lynn has been telling her story through song and inspiring others to do the same; she is the patron saint of country music, a living legend whose mere mention conjures the core identity of the genre—colorfully woven yarns that tell the truth; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Lynn continues to tour and perform—most recently receiving a thunderous welcome of applause as she performed before a crowd of 20,000 at Bridgestone Arena as a tribute to Merle Haggard; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Lynn's ever-growing legacy is one that lands her firmly among the pantheon of country music greats, and she is wholly deserving of esteem and recognition; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby recognize and honor Loretta Lynn for her illustrious career in country music, extending our sincere best wishes for much success and happiness in all her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.